



REHABBING MIND, BODY, ESPRIT DE CORPS



On Monday, May 9 the *Los Angeles Times* reported on a growing number of military servicemembers who have suffered catastrophic wounds that will require years of care in military hospitals. The Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs are scrambling to put together a continuum of long-term care for severely wounded personnel. Programs never dreamed of when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 are now part of the regimen for

wounded personnel, including a full range of sports activities, counseling for family members and group discussions with Vietnam Veterans. Marine Lance Cpl. Juan Dominguez has come a long way since October, when a roadside bomb in Afghanistan ripped off his legs above the knees and shredded his right arm above the elbow. He is looking forward to a surfing trip to San Onofre and he'd like to run in the Marine Corps Marathon once he is fitted and capable with his permanent prosthetic legs. Part of his therapy will be relearning to play the guitar. "My plate is pretty much busy from morning until

dark," he said.

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SECOND ANNUAL WARRIOR GAMES BEGIN



From their first day on the yellow footprints at recruit training or day one at Officer Candidates School, Marines have developed into athletic warriors. Established in February 2008, the Wounded Warrior Regiment's Warrior Athlete Reconditioning program has succeeded in bringing out that same warrior instinct for wounded, ill and injured Marines nationwide. Also known as the WAR, the program, provides opportunities for Marines to engage in individual or team sports settings that improve their overall mental and physical fitness. This is a

good way to get their mind, body and spirit through an arduous process that will have its challenges," said Lt Col. Nicholas E. Davis, Wounded Warrior Battalion East commanding officer. Wounded, ill and injured Marines are further introduced to various sports and have the opportunity to build their confidence at sporting events, camps and outings. From May 16-21, in Colorado Springs, Colo., a 25-member All-Marine team will compete in the second annual Warrior Games. They will go head to head with service members from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. The Games will include the following events; wheelchair basketball, volleyball, archery, track and field, cycling, swimming and shooting.

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Pictured above, Marine Veteran Josh Wege, who lost both legs below the knee after the Humvee he was riding in struck a makeshift bomb in Iraq. As part of the Wounded Warrior games, Wege is competing in the 100- and 200-yard dashes, basketball and volleyball. Photo courtesy of Arizona Daily Star.

NEWS

SOLAR PATROL IN AFGHANISTAN

On Monday, May 9, *the Wall Street Journal* reported on a company of U.S. Marines that recently conducted a remarkable three-week patrol through southern Afghanistan, replacing hundreds of pounds of spare batteries in their packs with roll-up solar panels the size of placemats to power their battle gear. By allowing the troops to recharge their radios, GPS devices and other equipment, the green technology freed the Marines of India Company from constant resupply by road and air. And by carrying fewer batteries, they carried more bullets. India Company's efforts are part of a larger paradox military planners are addressing: modern U.S. forces are more lethal than any in history, but they also gobble up more energy. That lengthens vulnerable supply lines and overloads soldiers and Marines in the field. Use of the solar gear means helicopters don't have to ferry extra batteries to the Marines, and trucks don't have to convoy more fuel for generators.

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UNLEASHING LABRADORS IN COUNTER-IED FIGHT

Man's best friend has been the Marine Corps best weapon in the counter-IED fight for some time. Now, the Corps is shifting the traditional breed of the military working dog from German Shepherd to Labrador Retriever. The German Shepherd was carefully bred to herd sheep and fend off predators, while the Labrador Retriever was originally created to help Canadian hunters catch game. The energetic yet even-tempered canine has become



arguably the most common household pet in the world. Yet the Labrador remains an able hunter, and therefore a competent aid to Marines conducting the delicate search for makeshift explosives, say those familiar with the Marine Corps' counter-IED efforts. Sgt. Steven Basham, the kennel supervisor with 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, said the Marine Corps began taking more interest in Labradors after an Auburn University study highlighted the breed's hunting instinct, disposition and controllability.

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[See Also: New weapons, war dogs eyed to fight IEDs >>](#)

MAJ. GEN. HUMMER NOMINATED TO LEAD MARFORRES

Maj. Gen. Steven A. Hummer has been nominated for a third star and to serve as the top officer for the New Orleans-based commands, according to a Defense Department announcement released May 8. Hummer currently serves as the deputy commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command in Quantico, Va. A career infantryman, Hummer served in the enlisted ranks from 1970 until 1973, when he was discharged as a sergeant. He returned to the Marine Corps as an officer after graduating from Albright College in Reading, Pa.

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THIRTY-YEAR MODERNIZATION EFFORT TO HANDLE GUAM MILITARY BUILDUP

In an attempt to increase the capacity of Guam's only commercial port to handle the population expansion and the U.S. military build-up, the Port Authority of Guam (PAG) is setting in motion a massive 30-year, \$260 million modernization plan to be undertaken in two phases. Though the transfer of 8,600 U.S. Marines and their dependents and support staff from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa has not yet begun, the Port has already shown signs of



cracking under the strain of rising activity. The Navy began releasing \$1.2 billion in construction task orders this month that will set off early infrastructure work meant to prepare base facilities for the Marines.

Authorities expect this yearly pace to continue past 2016 ratcheting up the need for building supplies. Presently, the only building material locally produced is cement, rendering the Port indispensable for importing building materials and machinery necessary for the military buildup. Constructed in 1969 with no significant upgrades since, the Port has many areas that are either near capacity or out-of-date.

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NEW MARADMIN UPDATING REENLISTMENT STANDARDS BRINGS BIG CHANGES



Recent changes in reenlistment procedures will help the Marine Corps identify and retain only the most qualified Marines by approving them through selection boards, according to Marine Corps Administrative Message 273/11. The message outlines the new competitive reenlistment procedures, which can affect Marines in both First and Subsequent Term Alignment Plan's, though first term Marines will feel the biggest impact. For fiscal year 2012, beginning Oct. 1, the system will change from the standard commander's recommendation to a career planner's tool with four ratings, which will allow commanders to evaluate the Marines based on their performance and eligibility to take on a boatspace, or designated slot, for fast filling military

occupational specialties. "Headquarters Marine Corps will evaluate Marines based upon their education and training scores, and match them with highly technical MOSs that they qualify for," said Lt. Col. Michael Landree, head of Enlisted Retention and Career Counseling Section, Manpower Management, Enlisted Assignments, Manpower and Reserve Affairs. "This gives Marines greater options when reenlisting rather than just their primary MOS."

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DEFENSE SECRETARY SALUTES MARINES



While visiting Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 12, 2011, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said: "I'm not here to give a long speech, and I do want to save plenty of time for any questions or comments, but I did want to come back to Lejeune one more time before I retire at the end of June, just to say thank you and, as I say, to take some questions and hear any concerns that you have. But first I just want to thank you for your service, for your sacrifices, for taking

care of your buddies, for your victories in Anbar and Helmand and so many other places. Thank you for protecting our country. And a special thanks to your families for their sacrifices, their service, their patience, for taking care of the home front while you're on the battlefield. Each one of you could have done something easier, safer and better paid, but you chose to step forward to wear this country's uniform, and most especially the eagle, globe and anchor. Our nation owes you an extraordinary debt for your decision to serve in a time of war and for what you're doing every day. "

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HERO OF THE WEEK

'POSSESSED OF SELFLESSNESS AND LOYALTY': LEJEUNE BATTALION REMEMBERS FALLEN HERO

During a patrol in Marjah District, Helmand province, April 23, Lance Cpl. Dominic Ciaramitaro made the ultimate sacrifice. Ciaramitaro, a machine gunner with Combined Anti-Armor Team Platoon, Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, was known for his uncommon loyalty and commitment to the Corps. Lance Cpl. Joshua Jones, a driver with Weapons Company who had served alongside the Grosse Pointe, Mich., native since they endured basic training together, finds himself suddenly without one of his most



dependable friends. "He was always happy, and always had something interesting or funny to say," Jones said. "He would make the worst day for anyone a better day." His awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with a combat "V" for valor, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and the Purple Heart. "He was one of those Marines who was just blessed in the sense that he was highly intelligent, physically fit, competent, and universally respected," said 1st. Lt. Gerard M. Van Amerongen, Ciaramitaro's platoon commander.

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RECON MARINE AWARDED NAVY CROSS FOR THRIVING IN HEAVY COMBAT



Gunnery Sgt. Brian M. Blonder was awarded the Navy Cross for thriving in the face of danger. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus presented the award during a ceremony at the Marine Corps War Memorial on May 10. Blonder shot and killed an insurgent who was aiming a rocket-propelled grenade at his Marines. At the end of an all-day fight, more than 50 Taliban were dead, scores were retreating, and the Marines took control of a key supply route through the village of Shewan, Afghanistan.

The firefight began when Marines and Afghan National Police were patrolling in Shewan, Afghanistan, a desert village in southern Afghanistan closer to the Iranian border, late morning Aug. 8, 2008. Blonder and Force Recon Platoon, along with an equal-sized element from Company G, were patrolling the village streets, anticipating enemy activity. Blonder and his Marines entered the village from its eastern border, while the Company G Marines entered from the North. Taliban insurgents had control of the village and were known to man fighting positions along the major roadway in southern Afghanistan. The Marines' mission was to gain control of the roadway, rid the village of Taliban, and help the Afghan police establish a presence in the village. "It was a busy day," Blonder said. Every Marine out there was a huge part of that fight. From the NCO (noncommissioned officer) leadership all the way up to the officer leadership

- everyone contributed all they had to that fight.

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EVENTS

JOINT SERVICE OPEN HOUSE MAY 21-22



The Joint Service Open House (JSOH) will take place on Saturday, May 21 and Sunday, May 22 at Andrews Airforce Base. The Golden Knights will perform at 12:00 p.m., followed by the Thunderbirds at 3:00 p.m. In addition there will be displays from all services, food booths and performances. For more information or to access the full schedule of events, please visit www.jsoh.org.

2ND ANNUAL MCA AMMO TECH AWARDS DINNER

The Marine Corps Association (MCA) and Marine Corps Systems Command will co-host the 2nd Annual MCA Ammo Tech Awards Dinner on May 24. The Dinner serves as the opportunity to formally recognize the professional achievements of the Corps' top performing Ammunition Technicians of the year for 2010. For registration, directions and more information, visit www.mcafdn.org and select the event schedule or call Sarah Cohen at 800-640-0174 or s.cohen@mca-marines.org.

[Click here to register >>](#)

